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USE CAUTION WHEN OPERATING GENERATORS!

Two confirmed cases of carbon monoxide poisoning

Contact:

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Martin County, FL – The Florida Department of Health in Martin County is urging residents to use extreme caution when operating generators following two confirmed cases of carbon monoxide poisoning in Martin County residents.

The couple were brought to the hospital on Tuesday, September 12 via ambulance after experiencing shortness of breath and chest pain. The couple, who remain hospitalized, were running a generator in their Stuart home.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a highly poisonous, odorless, colorless, tasteless gas that interferes with the delivery of oxygen in the blood to the rest of the body and is highly poisonous. Suspected exposures should contact 911.

Department of Health continues its disease surveillance throughout the storm recovery and will update the community on a regular basis.

DOH recommends the following precautions to help prevent carbon monoxide poisoning:

- Do not burn charcoal or gas grills inside a house, garage, vehicle, tent or fireplace.
- **NEVER** use a generator indoors, including in homes, garages, basements, crawl spaces, and other enclosed or partially enclosed areas, even with ventilation. Opening doors and windows or using fans will not prevent CO build-up in the home.
- **ALWAYS** locate the unit outdoors on a dry surface, away from doors, windows, vents, and air conditioning equipment that could allow CO to come indoors. Follow the instructions that come with your generator.
- Install battery-operated CO alarms or plug-in CO alarms with battery back-up in your home, according to the manufacturer's installation instructions. The CO alarms should be certified to the requirements of the latest safety standards for CO alarms (UL 2034, IAS 6-96, or CSA 6.19.01).
- Test your CO alarms frequently and replace dead batteries.

- **REMEMBER** that you cannot see or smell CO and portable generators can produce high levels of CO very quickly.
- If you start to feel sick, dizzy, or weak while using a generator, get to fresh air RIGHT AWAY. DO NOT DELAY.
- If you have a poisoning emergency, call your nearest Florida Poison Information Center at 1-800-222-1222. If the victim has collapsed or is not breathing, call 911 immediately.

About the Florida Department of Health

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